

## CHAPTER 9

### MILITARY PROTOCOL, COURTESY, AND UNIFORMS

As members of the Uniformed Services of the United States, it is important for PHS Commissioned Officers to be familiar with military courtesies and customs. Nothing will cause the formation of a negative opinion of an officer and the Corps faster than an incorrectly worn uniform, improper grooming, or lack of appropriate action or response. While it is generally not necessary for a PHS officer to know all the nuances of military protocol, all officers should know the fundamentals such as saluting, appropriate forms of address, and other basic courtesies. Common sense is usually the best guide on how to act, but in some circumstances there may be a need for more formal guidelines. Published rules for PHS officers can be found in the CCPM pamphlet, number 61, "Information on Uniforms," dated September 1993 and updates published in the *Commissioned Corps Bulletin*. The best source of personal knowledge is often a current or former member of the Armed Forces, or an experienced PHS officer. Also, useful resource books, such as *The Bluejackets' Manual* published by the United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Maryland, are available at military exchanges.

#### Protocol

Covered versus Uncovered—You can never go wrong if you are "outdoors" and wearing your cover (headgear). "Outdoors" includes covered walks, theater marquees, and overhangs that extend over the sidewalk. Officers should be uncovered when "indoors."

Posting of Colors—Officers not in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over their heart. **Officers in uniform should never place their hand over their heart.** When in uniform and covered, officers should stand at attention, face the flag and salute. When in uniform and uncovered officers should stand at attention and face the flag with no salute.

Pledge of Allegiance—Uncovered officers should face the flag, stand at attention, and recite the pledge.

Playing of the National Anthem—Covered officers should stand at attention, face the flag and salute. Uncovered officers (inside) should stand at attention, do not salute.

Playing of the PHS Anthem—Officers should stand at attention and face the PHS flag.

Proper Hand Salutes—All officers should be able to render and properly return a hand salute. Salutes are performed by smartly raising the right hand until the tip of the forefinger touches the lower part of the headdress, thumb and fingers extended and joined, palm to the left, upper arm horizontal, forearm inclined at 45 degrees, hand and wrist straight while turning the head toward the person being saluted. To complete the salute, drop the arm to its normal position by the side in one motion while turning the head and eyes to the front.

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Proper Greetings (when saluting)—Accompany your salute with "Good Morning Sir or Ma'am." Officers below the rank of Commander (O-5) may be addressed as "Mister" or "Miss" while officers at or above the rank of Commander are usually addressed by their rank i.e., "Good Evening CDR Smith." You can never go wrong using "Sir" or "Ma'am," but it is a nice touch to properly address a senior officer.

Proper Timing of Salutes—Salutes are usually rendered between 6 and 30 paces while covered, however, saluting is more effective between 6 and 10 paces. If running, you should slow down to a walk prior to saluting. If standing, you should face the senior officer, come to attention, then render the salute. Salutes should be rendered when officers meet and just prior to departure if a conversation is held. It is the junior officer's responsibility to initiate the salutes prior to departure. Salutes should be rendered and returned to all members of uniformed services. Some services salute in uncovered situations, the proper response is to greet the person saluting you with "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," or "Good Evening," depending on the time of day. When approaching a group of officers of different ranks, the salute should be directed toward the senior officer. Likewise if a senior officer approaches a group of officers they should all stop what they are doing and render a proper salute.

Situations When Not To Salute—Saluting should not be performed when uncovered, when carrying articles in both hands, in public conveyances when obviously inappropriate, and in other public places where inappropriate (theaters, hotels, restaurants, etc.) prior to being able to remove the cover.

Proper Salute When Overtaking a Senior Officer—When moving faster than a senior officer in front of you, you should render a hand salute when abreast of the officer and say "By your leave Sir or Ma'am." The senior officer should return your salute and say "Carry-on," "Very Well," or "Permission Granted." You may then drop the salute and proceed.

Riding in a Car—The place of honor is always on the right, so the senior officer should sit on the right. This holds true when walking with a senior officer also. It is the junior officer's responsibility to line up on the correct side of the senior officer. When entering a vehicle the junior officer should enter first and the senior officer last so the senior officer will be in position to exit the vehicle first.

Man or Woman First?—If a male officer is with a female officer, the woman goes first except when assistance is needed, when there is no one to escort the female officer to the appropriate seat in a public area, when there is a large crowd where the man will clear the way, or when at official occasions where rank takes precedence over gender.

### **Courtesy**

Standing—When seated and uncovered a junior officer should stand and come to attention when approached by a senior officer. At that point the senior officer should say "At Ease," "Carry On," or

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"Be Seated." All officers should stand immediately when a flag rank officer enters the room. The flag officer should then give one of the above commands.

Meals—During meals junior officers should begin eating only after the highest ranking officer begins to eat. The highest ranking officer at the table should begin eating after the highest ranking officer in the room begins their meal, then other officers at the table may begin. It is the junior officer's responsibility to perform this act of courtesy. The senior officers should also be aware others are waiting for their lead.

### Uniforms

Uniform of the Day—Summer Blue, Summer White, Summer Khaki, Service Dress Blue, Modified Service Dress Blue, and Service Dress Blue Sweater uniforms during appropriate season.

Quality—All uniform components should be obtained from official uniform suppliers that meet the specifications listed in the CCPM (including shirts, blouses, skirts, pants, shoes, etc.) and must fit in a reasonable manner.

Cleanliness—The uniform should be clean and all devices, insignia, lace, and ribbons neat and free of tarnish. Shoes should be shined and in good repair.

Identification Badges—No article(s) other than the meeting identification badge should protrude from or be attached to the uniform (i.e., pens, pencils, calculators, necklaces, etc.).

Jewelry—One watch and one bracelet are permitted. One finger ring per hand in addition to a wedding ring is permitted. Ankle bracelets are not permitted. Appropriate tie clasps/tacks may be worn one inch below the center of the male officer's tie. Earrings are not authorized for male officers, while female officers may wear 6 mm gold ball earrings.

Ribbon Bars—Ribbons are worn on the left breast with the lower edge of the bottom row centered one-fourth inch above the pocket or in the same relative position as if a pocket were present. Ribbons should be worn in the appropriate descending order of precedence as prescribed in the CCPM with the highest honor placed on the uppermost row nearest the heart.

Men's Grooming—A male officer's hair should be neat, clean, and groomed in a tapered manner without touching the ears or collar and not fall below the eyebrows when the headgear is removed. The bulk of the hair should not exceed two inches. Sideburns should be neatly trimmed, tapered, of even width (not flared), not extend below the earlobe, and end in a clean cut horizontal line. Beards and/or mustaches should be neatly trimmed and groomed. The bulk of the beard should not exceed one-half inch and the length should not exceed one inch. Unless worn with a beard, a mustache should not extend below the comers of the mouth or below the line of the upper lip.

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Women's Grooming—A female officer's hair should be worn in a conservative arrangement that may touch the collar but not fall below it or show under the brim of the hat. Pony tails and/or plaited hair is not permitted. Braids may be worn close to the head but must not interfere with the proper wearing of the headgear. Hair ribbons are not authorized but inconspicuous pins or fastening devices may be used. Cosmetics should be conservative and in good taste. Nails may be polished but not extend more than one-fourth inch beyond the finger tips. Hosiery should be beige or neutral shades, undecorated, and seamless.